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Canada's New Flag

by

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This little Booklet is Gratefully and Affectionately Dedicated to all those Brave Canadians who offered their lives in the World's War, fighting for Right —Justice, Liberty and Truth; both those who fell and those who survive.

Canada's New Flag

This—The First of July, 1917—is Canada's 50th Birthday. A fitting time surely to introduce a new flag.

The Union Jack is a flag of crosses.

In pre-war days these crosses had little significance for Canadians. They loved the Union Jack because it was the flag of the British Empire. In our eyes that bit of red and white and blue symbolized the British Empire. It represented to us all that the Empire stood for and had stood for throughout the years.

Of course every school-boy and school-girl were taught the old story of the crosses on our flag; that the central red cross on the white field was the cross of St. George, the design of the flag of England in the old days; that the blue came from the Scottish flag, which was a white cross on a blue field—the cross of St. Andrews; that after the union of the two countries these crosses were blended for a flag design by blazoning the cross of St. George on the cross of the Scottish flag; and in 1801, when Ireland entered the union, the cross of St. Patrick, a red oblique cross on a white shield, was added. Since then this union of design has comprised the "UNION JACK."

But—most of us, when we were grown to manhood and womanhood even forgot this story, or had a very hazy recollection of it. It was more the "colours" of the flag we loved—the red and

white and blue, than the crosses on the flag. But most of all, we loved it because it represented "Our Country." Not only Canada, but the dear parent land that gave us birth and cherished, guarded and guided us through helpless infancy, toddling childhood, into adventurous youth, and finally to the very advent of a virile manhood—even there carefully shielding us in the beneficient mantle of parenthood from storms and disaster.

THE BIRTH OF CANADA'S FLAG

Then—something happened. Something that changed our flag. Something that changed Canada from virile youthfulness to the full stature of manhood, even as a boy who is all at once thrust into hardship and trial often attains a coveted manhood through this very gateway of pain. A time of disaster came to the world, of travail and blood and suffering—three years and more the world was in its throes. And from it emerged—our flag; a glorious flag. Not covered with stars. Ah, no—for there is a grander emblem even than this beautiful one—without which there could be no stars—it is the way to the stars. In this new flag the crosses of St. George, St. Andrew and St. Patrick were no more—or rather they had merged into this other. In their stead were just—crosses. They were crosses of—blood. Straight through the middle of Canada's new flag appeared a big, clear cross of blood. Nothing can ever wipe it out. It is the life-blood of thousands of Canada's sons. At last Canada has helped make a flag for herself—and at a tremendous cost. Now the flag we call Union Jack is peculiarly hers. Canada helped

save the old flag. She helped make the new. SHE HELPED MARK THE CROSSES THERE. And evermore shall these crosses as we behold them on our flag, bring back to us the faces of loved ones who now fill the heroes' graves "Somewhere in France"; evermore, too, shall they speak to us of Ypres, The Somme, St. Julien, Langemark, Aisne, Verdun, Vimy Ridge, and a score and more of other sacred spots where our flag was born. So throughout the coming days and years as waves the Union Jack up to the blue dome of Canada's fair land—evermore as its red crosses flash and flutter against their background of maple leaves, our very souls must cry out:

"Ah—that cross of blood! The blood of our own dear sons! They shed it for us! They shed it for the world! Thank God, they were not afraid of the cross! They but followed the footsteps of the Master who gave His life for the world! We must live worthy of those crosses! Evermore the flag our brave fellows made is telling us that if we would live worthily, we too, must sacrifice for our brother-man—live by the way of the cross! But it leads to glory! Thank God our flag is a flag of crosses!"

And so as we gaze on its glorified folds through all our being runs a thrill—such an exquisite thrill. But in it is much of pain that seems to tear asunder our very hearts. But there is more than pain: there is gratitude and pride and devotion, and a strange, wild, almost unspeakable joy—for ever has the deepest and holiest joy a foundation of pain.

THE UNION IN THE FLAG

And surely it is fitting that after this terrible world's war not only Canada, but the British Empire should have for its flag one that speaks not of by-gone saints, but of those thousands of martyred heroes—her own brave sons of to-day, representing not only her three oldest provinces, but those virile, newer lands of North and South, and East and West, who in the full blood of their young manhood willingly sacrificed their very lives to save the old flag and to maintain in the world the principles of liberty, justice and right-ness. There is no kinship like the kinship of pain. And the kinship of pain suffered for a common object and that object a righteous one—such kinship is bound and rivetted together by bonds unbreakable by time. So have been welded together by recent experiences the various Provinces of the British Empire. "The Cross" is always the greatest rallying centre. And every province, from the smallest to the largest in the federation known as "The British Empire," has rallied round a cross borne for the world. The song of the trench has been,

"We are not divided, all one body we—
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity."

And this "one-ness" of the trench must evermore be the one-ness of the British Empire; a one-ness of HOPE that right (not might) must triumph both on the battlefield and throughout the world; a one-ness of DOCTRINE—not of *creed, there was no creed there—but a doctrine of duty done at all hazards and of faith in Christ, which faith destroyed the fear of death and made it but the entrance of a fuller life beyond; and a one-ness of CHARITY—not a charity that allows men to do wrong irregardless of orders, but that protects the weak—a charity by which a people love by serving, that lifts her brother-man up by being herself lifted up in high and holy living, and by protecting the world from the onslaughts of Satan wrought by crafty, selfish and Godless men.

And now as Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Ireland, Scotland, England, gaze on the Union Jack, its crosses speak of a deeper union than has been: The federation of a common suffering and a common sacrifice for a common object—one people girded together to maintain in the world, even by the way of the red cross if need be, the principles of justice and liberty and righteousness. So evermore throughout every part of our empire the crosses on our flag proclaim "All one body we!"

* Mr. Stewart Lyon, official press correspondent, sends the following from France: "Many of the men have little knowledge of creeds and religious observances, but I have met only one who did not understand the significance of the cross."

Canada's New Flag

A FLAG THAT BEARS THE WORLD'S CROSSES

The British Empire has been at war because she was willing to bear the cross for civilization. Justice, liberty, righteousness, democracy—the very foundation stones of civilization were attacked and this at a point where weak people could be easily overrun. Who was to fight civilization's battle? Was there anywhere "Knights of a round table" gallant and brave enough, with ideals so lofty and with motives so unselfish as to undertake civilization's cause purely—for the sake of that cause? "Here" responded Britain, "Not for our own ends of glory, but for the world!"

And she has been willing to change her traditions of centuries full to her of golden memories, established and maintained through noble deeds and brave lives; willing to overturn all her economic life; to go hungry if need be; willing to steep herself in turmoil and darkness and blood, even to the life-blood of thousands of her brave sons to SAVE THE WORLD—Good God, does there still live on the soil of this fair country a son so narrow-visioned, so cramped of soul as to say, "This is England's war!" Who does not rejoice even to be called the son of an empire brave enough, holy enough of purpose to take up the cross for such a cause?

Surely it is fitting that after such a war the British Empire should fling forth fearlessly in God's air a flag blazoned with "a cross"!

Canada's New Flag

TWO FLAGS IN ONE

The flag of christianity and of the British Empire are one and the same. The cross is the emblem of Christianity—of Christ and his teachings. Perhaps never before in the history of the world were the two so synonomous. Think of an Empire almost with one voice putting aside all that she loved and held dear—the old familiar ways of peace and home and loving hearts to take up the cause of the weak brother, to maintain in the world justice and liberty, with no motive of her own gain or self-seeking—surely this was Christ-like. Surely she was fighting for the cause of Christ! Surely then she merits—a flag of crosses! And, bit by bit, the world is coming to see that the British Empire is fighting for the principles of the Cross, which Christ himself came to establish on the earth—embodied in His sermon on the Mount. England's war you say! Ah, no—Christ's war.

"Watchman, tell us of the night—
  Does it nothing of promise bring?"
"Yes, a glorious waving flag
  Lightens where its colours swing."

"Watchman, what is on that flag—
  Aught to speak of coming day?
"Traveller, yes it is—'the Cross'
  Flung abroad in rich array."

Canada's New Flag

"Watchman, did you say THE CROSS
Feeble man has set on high?
Surely then at last the day,
Promised day of God is nigh!"

"Watchman, look again and see
If the cross perchance is red?"
"Yes, and men are following it—
Ah! *By Christ Himself they're led!*"

THE FLAG THAT PROCLAIMS THE WAY TO TRUE GREATNESS

The way to true greatness has always been the way of the cross. This, too, does our flag of the crosses proclaim.

Has anything worth while in life—in the life of an individual, a country, a nation—ever been accomplished without sacrifice? Look back over your own life, over the lives of those you have known, heard of, read of; over the history of any people; over the history of the world—it has always been the same story; gain out of loss, crown out of cross. Without sacrifice, self-denial in some form, no great invention, achievement, learning—no great life has ever been given to the world. It is ever the way of nature; first death, then life. It was the way of Christ Himself.

"And all through life we see a cross,
Where sons of men yield up a breath;
There is no gain but that through loss,
There is no life except by death."

"Whoso loseth his life shall find it," is true of the individual, institution, city, country, province,

nation. It is truer of the British nation to-day than ever before. For the sake of the world—the great principles that underlie the world's good she has in this terrible war been "Losing her life"—the lives of thousands of her bravest sons, millions of gold, placing on the altar all that is most valuable in commercial life. But the promise of the cross—our flag-emblem, holds: she shall find her life. Her sons who gave their lives in maintaining the interests of the cross—they have not died! No one who dies "in action"—action for the good of the world—DIES. They "find their lives"—a fuller, grander, happier life than before known. And so, too, our nation is finding he life; finding it in the greater loyalty of the people of every province in the empire, a greater and deeper federation than has been; in a grander commercial life, a grander civic life, a grander religious life—a life fuller and nobler and more world-lifting than any she has yet lived. "Whoso loseth his life shall find it"!—Yes, and not only "find" it for herself, but for those others for whom she was willing to lose it: For Belgium, Servia, Poland, for France and Russia, and Italy too, she has helped find a more glorious life—both national and individual. If not, the war has been in vain. But it shall not be in vain. Christ's cross was not in vain.

Then evermore let our flag proclaim it:
"Whoso loseth his life shall find it."

Canada's New Flag

THE TRUE-BLUE FLAG

Britons have ever been "true blue." But they have best shown this in the World's War. Listen to the whisper of the breezes as they play here and there about the flag—they are saying:

"Catch our glimmer of blue! It proclaims the loyalty of your sons—were they not loyal at St. Julien, at Vimy Ridge—the very soil of Flanders proclaims their loyalty! It took loyalty to put that red cross on your flag—that is why it has the blue back of the cross."

The blue back of the red cross on our flag proclaims, too, that in this war we have been loyal to the teachings of the cross; and that Canadians—every Briton, must evermore be loyal to that cross. Christ bore the cross because he was loyal to us; therefore we will bear the cross for Him—even the cross of war if need be.

Surely to-day the words of that old Church song must be echoed in every Canadian heart—and every Briton's, and have a fuller meaning than ever before. In fact, it seems to be almost the song of our flag:

"In the Cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

"Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the cross are sanctified—
PEACE is there which KNOWS NO ENDING
Joys which through all TIME abide."

We can best be loyal to our king and country by being loyal to the teachings of the flag.

Canada's New Flag

THE WHITENESS ON THE FLAG

But look at our new flag again! Notice that emerging from the red crosses, back of them, appears—not red, but WHITE. What does this white symbolize? This: Through the blood of thousands of our sons, because they were willing to take up the cross for their fellow-men—a great whiteness shall come to the world. The whiteness of peace. The whiteness of a new brotherhood. The whiteness of a greater Christlikeness. Glorious whiteness!—but whiteness is always the background of a cross borne for others.

THE PEACE CROSS

Notice, too, that this whiteness is also in the form of the cross. So in the world's new white life of peace that is coming because of those who were heroic enough to take up the cross of mankind—in this coming age of peace there must be crosses borne if the world is to maintain its peace—its dearly bought whiteness. We must be willing to be unselfish for our brother-man, willing to share, to put aside our selfish love of gain, love of power; more and more to overcome the desires of the flesh and attain unto the life dominated by spirit. The white-life conforms to the plan of the cross.

A democracy with the flag of Christ as its national flag! Surely its constitution and all its national life must be based and modelled on His constitution for the world. Not a law written on stone—breakable. But a simple, childlike word written on the heart; a "new commandment" of love for a new world with a new flag:

"Love one another!"

CANADA CHOOSES HER OWN FLAG

So, having learned the meaning of our new Union Jack and Canada having come to man's estate, do we of our own free-will and choice accept this flag as ours?

Are we willing to LIVE for it?

Are we willing to DIE for it?

Are we willing to live BY IT?—By the teachings of that cross so gloriously symbolized there? Are we willing to help maintain them in our individual life, in our home life, in our civic and commercial life, in all Canadian life; in the life of our great empire; and throughout the world?

Only so are we worthy of the heroes who have given us Canada's flag—

"O, God, may grace to us be given
To follow in their train!"

Only so can we be:

"A nation that shall stand
A light upon the world's high hill,
A voice that evil cannot still,
A source of blessing to the land:
Its strength not brick, nor stone, nor wood,
But justice, love and brotherhood."

Canada's New Flag

THE SPECIAL BIRTHDAY MESSAGE OF THE FLAG

CANADIANS!

"Carry on" and take courage!
For back of our red-cross we're sure
Is a great white-blessing coming—
May it ever and ever endure!

But it comes, this blessing of WORLD-PEACE
In the same old way of—THE CROSS,
Endure! Endure! Then, ye Britons—
Remember our gain out of loss!

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Some day will this red-cross be lifted—
O God, may it's work soon be through!
And the white life of PEACE and BROTHERHOOD
Be revealed—in a world that is new.

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